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SPEAKING OUT

Feds revise offer to abuse victims of residential schools

by John Copley

There's good news and there's bad news coming out of Ottawa this month and the end result could affect ten to twelve thousand victims who are trying to settle claims they've launched for the abuse they suffered while attending one or more of the nation's now-defunct Indian residential schools. The good news is that Ottawa has reversed an earlier decision that would have prevented Aboriginal citizens from pursuing further legal action once they agreed to take a cash settlement from government. Ralph Goodale, the minister responsible for settling the Aboriginal residential school dispute claims, told media that several changes had been made to improve the ADR process and "that after careful consideration of all the factors, two contentious release-requirements were changed. Claimants who accept compensation awards or settle litigation will not be precluded from the possibility of pursuing future litigation for loss of language and culture."

The bad news is that almost immediately following the announcement lawyers for the claimants said they'd be telling their clients to reject the deal and to refuse to participate in it. They're pushing for a class-action suit, saying that over 60,000 residential school survivors and their families suffer from after-effects of the system. Only 15 percent of the claimants can be dealt with through the ADR process. Even though Ottawa has agreed that claimants can proceed with legal action (if they wish to do so) to seek compensation for loss of culture and language, lawyers acting on behalf of victims say it's not enough. They want the courts to decide; the problem is that the courtroom process can take decades, and that's a luxury few residential school victims can afford.

Craig Brown, lead lawyer for a National Class Action filed on behalf of residential school claimants called Ottawa's Dispute Resolution program "another wasteful government bureaucracy."

"We need the political will to settle all residential school claims and heal these lifelong wounds," he added, suggesting that government drop the ADR process. "The National Class Action offers a superior mechanism for the prompt, efficient and fair resolution of all claims." Alberta lawyer Jon Faulds said the government's ADR is lost before it begins.

"The bottom line is it won't work; it's doomed to failure," said Faulds. "They will probably try and call it a kinder, gentler way of handling claims, but it's not. They will force every qualifying victim to relive his or her residential school experience. They will only compensate 15% of all residential school survivors. The vast majority of those qualifying for compensation will only receive 70% of their award. They will force a victim in the Prairies or the Maritimes to take less compensation than a victim in British Columbia or Ontario."


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The feds have always said a case involving loss of language and culture would be difficult to prove and difficult to compensate. Spokesman John Embury, speaking for Minister Goodale, said that "no court has recognized that language and culture should be in there at this point", adding that government contends that the best way to address the language and culture issues is by funding community programs aimed at children.

But they have now agreed to allow claimants to pursue a second lawsuit, even if they've been paid for one already. Why not take the money that's being offered? 20, 50 or 70 percent is better than 0 percent - and it's a start. Furthermore, a pay-out is an admission of guilt and that should go a long way to helping victims, should they decide to pursue further action through the courts. Is it then just a matter of lawyers looking for easy money, another day in the meeting room, another day in court, another 500 pages to file, another year to read it. Will the victims ever get their share and if they do, how much will be left for the pain and suffering?

The biggest grievance that's come forward since Ottawa reversed its decision on Native claimants relitigating is coming from the legal community, not the victims - who just want fair compensation, closure and to get on with their lives. When the decision was made

Continued on Page 8

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Métis National Council selects new leader

In a show of unprecedented solidarity, the elected leadership of the historic Métis Nation in Canada has unanimously chosen Clément Chartier as the new President of the Métis National Council (MNC).

Mr. Chartier, a lawyer from Northwest Saskatchewan, has been at the forefront on the Métis Nation's political agenda for decades. He has acted as legal counsel for the Native Council of Canada and for the Métis Nation during various constitutional rounds. He is a former President of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples and since 1998 he has been the President of the Métis Nation - Saskatchewan. Throughout his professional life, Mr. Chartier has also acted in various legal capacities in defending the rights of Métis people in the courts across Canada. Most recently, Mr. Chartier acted as co-counsel for the MNC in its interventions in R. v. Powley and R. v. Blais before the Supreme Court of Canada.

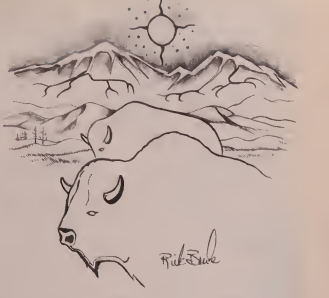
In his acceptance speech, President Chartier reflected on the Métis Nation's on-going and eventful struggle to secure its rightful place within the Canadian federation.

"Since 1816, and the Battle of Seven Oaks to the Red River Resistance and the Battle of Batoche our people have never wavered in our vision to have our existence and rights recognized in Canada," stated Chartier. "In the 1930s, Métis leaders in Alberta once again raised the Métis Nation's flag and rallied our people. In the 1940s, our veterans set aside our fight briefly in order to defend the rights of all Canadians overseas. In the 1950s and 1960s, we joined with other Aboriginal peoples to assert our rights in Canada and address the deplorable social and economic circumstances our people faced."

"In our agenda, we reached a high point in 1982 with our Aboriginal rights being recognized and affirmed in Canada's Constitution," he continued. "It was then that we created the MNC to further our rights-based agenda. Twenty years later, we are now on a new high with the Supreme Court affirming what our people have been saying for generations - we are a distinct Aboriginal people with rights. I want to acknowledge the role of all our citizens, our communities, our Elders, our Veterans, our strong leaders of past and present and our Métis lawyers who have collectively brought us to this exciting moment in our long history."

Mr. Chartier added, "This is a turning point in our relationship with governments in Canada. The choice is clear, litigation or negotiation. We have always wanted the latter. Through negotiations, we can create a safe and respectful place for our children, communities, culture and language in Canada and build a stronger federation. Through litigation, we create uncertainty for economic development; delay the inevitable, and waste valuable resources in the courts. We hope governments see the opportunity available to them and choose negotiations with us."

Mr. Chartier concluded, "With the Powley decision and the exciting opportunity to strike a new relationship with Canada under the leadership of Paul Martin, we truly believe this is a dawn of a new day for our people. I am both humbled and honoured to be entrusted with the role of working with the elected leadership of the Métis Nation to push forward our people's national vision. I believe we will eventually be successful in realizing the aspirations of our ancestors."



The MNC is the national and international representative of the historic Métis Nation in Canada. The MNC is created by the Métis Nation of Ontario, Manitoba Métis Federation, Métis Nation - Saskatchewan, Métis Nation of Alberta and the Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia mandating a national body. It is estimated that there are 350,000 to 400,000 citizens of the historic Métis Nation from Ontario westward.



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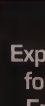
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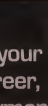


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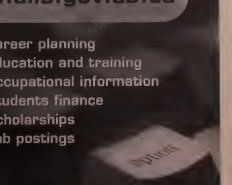
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Urban addicts face new hurdles

by John Copley

Ottawa's decision to enforce a 23 year old policy regarding the funding of treatment for First Nations clients suffering from substance abuse in the province of Alberta, has drawn ire from across the province - but some health care critics say the new rules are just bringing the Aboriginal population in Canada's wealthiest province in line with how the rest of the country operates. Double coverage, the extra burden on Alberta's health care system and annual upgrading are other contributing factors.

The new treatment policy means that in Alberta, as in other provinces, First Nations citizens requiring substance abuse treatment must return to their communities if they want Ottawa to pay the bill.

Health Canada's Nick Hossack told media the policy change was made simply to ensure that the beds in First Nations rehab centres didn't sit empty.

"It's part of trying to ensure every dollar we spend in treatment is a successful expenditure," he said. "We've introduced and circulated a more defined referral process."

Poundmaker Lodge Treatment Centre Director, Leona Carter, told media that poor judgment was used when the decision to enforce the rules was made. "People forget about the impact on the clients when they make these decisions," she said. "What the federal government needs to remember is that some of these people are going to die on our streets this winter." Louise Crane, the Aboriginal health facilitator at the Alexandra Community Health Centre in Edmonton, agrees. She says more than one client has already told her that they won't seek treatment on the reserve. She wants some alternatives, especially when the environment in the community is an unknown.

"The outcome could be that there will be people not getting treatment," she said. "I'm really worried that a lot of the communities still have a toxic environment for these particular people, and I would like them to have the option to go elsewhere."

Carter says the announcement comes as a surprise, one totally unexpected considering the fact that there are no beds in the rehab centres on Alberta reserves - even if clients wanted to return home to use them. She says federal beds on reserves can have waiting lists several months long, and that extensive travel is difficult, at best.

"These people don't want to be told they have to go on waiting lists for three months at one centre that could be 300 miles out of the city, when they could be in a facility 20 minutes away in a week," she emphasized. Hossack's reply: "What we're offering people who live off-reserve is transportation to one of our treatment centres."

No word on whether or not that's a two-way ticket. But there is word about the lack of bed space. Hossack says if there isn't one to be had in Alberta, the new policy allows clients to be shipped to treatment centres outside the province.

Chair of Edmonton's Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee, Lewis Cardinal, says the plan is senseless. "Clearly," he said, referring to the Health Canada decision," this is not a well thought-out plan. It hasn't considered that a lot of First Nations are not on reserves; they work and live in the city. It's denying the fact that more than 50 percent of our First Nations are off reserve. I think it's taking away choice."

Despite the objections, however, there is a new policy in place. The next set of questions might need to be directed toward those who can explain just how the funds for drug, alcohol and substance abuse programs are doled out. If indeed, the critics are correct, and only half the people believed to be living on reserve actually are, questions do need to be answered. Batter up!



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Chiefs outraged at passage of Bill C-6

The Specific Claims Resolution Act known as Bill C-6 received Royal Assent by the Senate of Canada earlier this month. If passed, this highly contested piece of legislation will lead to the establishment of a new independent claims body. According to government officials, the legislation will help First Nations and Canada reach resolution on specific claims and bring greater transparency, efficiency and fairness to the current process.

First Nations leaders across the country however, are outraged at the passage of the act. Samson Cree Nation dismissers took their protest to Parliament Hill to voice their firm opposition to the bill and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians among others have vowed to take the government to court.

"It's going to be challenged legally, we can tell you that," said Charles Fox, vice-chief of Ontario for the Assembly of First Nations. "The opposition from our communities, the grassroots, is very real," he told a news conference.

"We are disappointed that the Senate of Canada, and Parliament as a whole have not heard the voices of the First Nations of Canada," said Grand Council Chief Earl Commanda, leader of the Anishinabek Nation. "We reject his flawed legislation outright!"

"I am disappointed that our overwhelming opposition to this bill was not heard or considered by the government," added AFN National Chief Phil Fontaine.

"This inherently flawed piece of legislation is unworkable, and the principles behind it are in need of serious examination and more extensive consultation with First Nations and other interested parties before an attempt is made to introduce this type of legislation. The legislation does nothing to provide for a truly independent and transparent claims body, one of the recommendations of the AFN-Canada Joint Task Force and a goal that is supported by First Nations," stated Fontaine. As it stands, he continued, "the bill compromises the independence and neutrality of the claims body by allowing the Minister and government unilateral authority to appoint Commissioners, instead of allowing for a joint process between First Nations and the federal government. First Nations must be allowed to participate in the processes that affect our futures."

Chief Fontaine explained that Bill C-6 institutes a cap on claims of $10 million, while placing no limits on the amount of time it takes to settle a claim. Those limits are regressive, he said. "Claims should be resolved as quickly and as fairly as possible. Resolving claims should be an opportunity to move forward in an equitable relationship, where all concerns are addressed in a just manner."

"We can build on existing work," added the National Chief. "We can move immediately to address urgent priorities like health, housing, education and economic development while we work out the details of longer-term goals like Treaty implementation and nation building. We can deal with accountability and transparency and do so in a context that respects Aboriginal and Treaty rights.

"What must first be done in order to accomplish that is to stop pursuing the Specific Claims Resolution Act as a priority. I urge leaders of all parties, all MPs, and the government of Canada itself to re-examine Bill C-6 as its amendments return it to the House of Commons and to make their opposition to the flawed processes and results of the legislation known by voting against this legislation.

"The Indian Act is out-of-date," concluded National Chief Fontaine. "We, as First Nations, have been saying so for years. Bill C-6 does nothing to change that. Only by working together can First Nations and federal governments come to conclusions and agreement that benefit all First Nations and all Canadians." The Federal government disagrees with the AFN view of the legislation "The Specific Claims Resolution Act is a key step toward a better process for addressing longstanding First Nation grievances," said INAC Minister Robert Nault. "The new independent body envisioned in this legislation will oversee a streamlined process for resolving specific claims that reflects the preference of both Canada and First Nations to right the wrongs of the past through constructive and co-operative negotiations. Under a revitalized process, the economic benefits that negotiated settlements bring to both First Nation communities and local economies can be more quickly realized, so we can focus our energies on building a brighter and more prosperous future for First Nation people."

"With a government transition looming, it makes absolutely no sense to further a political agenda that will likely be changed significantly when Paul Martin becomes Prime Minister," said Grand Council Chief Commanda. "It is in the best interests of First Nations and Parliament to reject these initiatives so this issue may be reviewed by the new leader and Cabinet, and allow First Nation across the country to provide further input and discussion."



at home on the plains. © *Christopher Vennay, Thunderbird*

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Haida ancestral remains return home

by John Copley

Last month several hundred members and friends of the Haida Nation visited the large and very old cemetery that overlooks the town of Old Massett, on Haida Gwaii, to give thanks to the Creator for allowing the remains of their ancestors to return home. Other First Nations have not been as fortunate when seeking the return of stolen remains, artifacts and other culturally significant memorabilia that disappeared at the turn of the 20th Century when at least three expeditions of "souvenir collectors" made their way to the Queen Charlotte's to raid abandoned Haida villages and grave sites. The Haida population, which numbered nearly 11,000 in the mid-1800s, was nearly wiped out by 1900 as a result of several serious outbreaks of smallpox that killed all but a few hundred.

During the last two weeks of October an entourage of Haida spiritual and community leaders, Elders and community members were in Chicago, Illinois, to reclaim the remains of about 150 of their ancestors. As Haida spiritual leaders carried out the important rituals that accompanied the sacred ceremonies, the traditional sounds reverberated throughout the walls of the Chicago Field Museum of Natural History.

Press conferences and meetings with Chicago's local and regional political and community leaders were also a part of the Haida agenda. The promise to have the remains returned to the Haida came just two years ago, but the fight to have them returned actually began in 1986 when the U.S. government was forced to realize and remember that hundreds of thousands of Aboriginal remains and ancient artifacts were interred in drawers and closets and closed-up rooms in old museums, schools and libraries across the nation, including the prestigious Smithsonian Institute. That's where a group of Northern Cheyenne leaders first got together to protest and express their outrage over the number of ancestral remains in museums and the lack of government programs to repatriate them. This movement encouraged many other Indigenous leaders from the Americas and elsewhere to begin staking their claims for a return of their ancestors.

More than 10,000,000 remains and pieces of history are believed to be stashed away, most of which are located in North America's older and "finer" museums.

"When we go into the room we … ask our Chiefs and Elders to talk to (the ancestors), to speak with them, to tell them that we are sorry it took so long to come and get them and take them back home," remarked Andy Wilson, one of the Haida members who led his tribe's efforts to "repatriate" the bones of their ancestors.

In November of 1897, George Dorsey, the curator of the Field Museum, delivered a lecture at the museum. He was convinced that traditional cultures were soon to go extinct.

"They are a doomed race," he said of the Haida. Dorsey's expedition to the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1897 and two others in 1901 and 1903 brought about 150 Haida skeletons to Chicago where they joined the skeletal human remains that had already been collected from every continent on earth, with the exception of Antarctica.

More than 4,000 human remains, a little more than a third of them Native American, remain in a tightly locked space deep inside Chicago's Field Museum. Field Museum archeologist, Jonathan Haas, says most of the remains at the museum were collected between 1890 and 1920. The area is off-limits - even to most museum employees.

Field Museum repatriation specialist, Helen Robbins, told media that though the museum wasn't compelled by law to turn over the skeletal remains of the Haida, they were doing so in the interest of humanity.

"Ethically, it's the right thing to do," she said, "but we are not required by the law to repatriate these remains."

The recent reclamation by the Haida is another in a continuing series of such events that have taken place during the past several years. In November of 2000 the American Museum of Natural History in New York City returned the remains of 48 ancestors to the Haida people. On the day they were returned, Nika Collision, one of 25 delegates who flew to New York to accept the remains, said it was very special moment.

"We consider them to be our grandmothers and our grandfathers," she said. "They have been away for too long and it is time for them to return home." Haida Gwaii, otherwise known as the Queen Charlotte's, are a beautiful group of islands off the west coast of British Columbia. The two largest islands, Graham and Moresby are home to about 6000 residents who live in one of seven Haida communities. More than 150 islands, which are divided into three physiographic units - the Queen Charlotte Ranges, the Skidegate Plateau and the Queen Charlotte Lowlands, make up the landscape/seascape of Haida Gwaii. The Queen Charlotte Islands includes the communities of Sandspit, Queen Charlotte City, Skidegate, Tlell, Port Clements, Masset and Old Massett.

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Centre teaches self-protection

by John Copley

Turn on the TV, turn on the radio. Do it night or day or anytime in between and with a short flip through the channels and scan down the dial - there it is, an infomercial lauding the benefits of physical fitness. Men and women punching the air, special guests nodding and smiling and telling you how much better you'll look and how much better you'll be able to defend yourself, if you call in right now and take advantage of the special CD martial arts training course.

Is that stuff a bunch of bunk? You bet it is. Unless your goal is just to have an exercise program to play around with. But if it's real physical fitness you seek, if it's meaningful defense training you need, there's a much better answer. Just ask Calen Paine. He's been involved with martial arts training for more than 20 years and he's been running his Edmonton-based business, The Training Centre, since 1995.

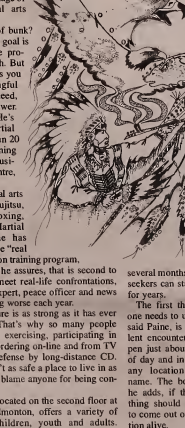
Trained in many martial arts disciplines, including Jujitsu, Kung Fu, Kick Boxing, Grappling, Filipino Martial Arts and others, Paine has developed his own unique "real world" personal protection training program, a strategy of instruction he assures, that is second to none, and designed to meet real-life confrontations, situations every crime expert, peace officer and news clipping says are growing worse each year.

"The need to feel secure is as strong as it has ever been," agreed Paine. "That's why so many people have taken up running, exercising, participating in martial arts - yes, even ordering on-line and from TV ads that promote self defense by long-distance CD. The world, however, isn't as safe a place to live in as it once was, so who's to blame anyone for being concerned?"

The Training Centre, located on the second floor at 11735-156 Street in Edmonton, offers a variety of training classes for children, youth and adults. Seminars, workshops, private classes - The Training Centre has a program for everyone.

"If you or your company's needs are unique, or if you'd like to initiate a program that trains your staff to levels of competency that meet the needs of today," assures Calen Paine, "we are the people that can do it for you." Paine and his staff are happy to sit down with companies and organizations to create a custom-made program that will meet all personal protection needs.

"The important thing to understand," explained Paine, in an interview, "is that self-defense and martial art are not the same thing. The latter is usually taught at the club or gym level and is designed specifically for self-discipline and a sense of personal well being. The self defense seminars and programs you'll find at The Training Centre teach via a method we call "aliveness training" that means participating in hands-on, real life situation scenarios."



Sounds exciting but does it work?

"Definitely," says Paine. "Of course, as with anything in life, what you put into it, is what you will take from it. But even a short one day course with us will help give the average person a better sense of awareness, and a better opportunity to evade a situation before it actually takes place."

The Training Centre's programs vary in length, some run for just one day, others for several months, while serious trainers and self defense seekers can visit with the Centre's ongoing programs for years.

The first thing everyone needs to understand, said Paine, is that a violent encounter can happen just about any time of day and in just about any location you can name. The bottom line, he adds, if that sort of thing should happen, is to come out of the situation alive.

"Survival is the only rule," he assured, "and survival is what we teach. The strategies and tactics we teach are easy to learn, easy to remember, and if students put the effort into the training that is required for full combat competency, they'll soon be able to cope with and survive under even the toughest conditions."

Paine says he's about to launch a campaign into Alberta's First Nation and Metis communities that will promote personal safety and staff training to Aboriginal groups, communities, law enforcement agencies, band administrations.

"Have Seminar - Will Travel," chuckled Paine, "That's one of our mottos. Our outreach seminars on self-defense, weapons defense, and security and restraint tactics are among the best anywhere. Our training methods are endorsed via our affiliation with the internationally renown, Straight Blast Gym Incorporated (SBGI), and our ongoing outreach program takes the bite out of winter by taking Training Centre self-defense seminars and workshops out into the communities."

Community leaders, institutional heads and business decision-makers, says Paine, can call him for more information or for a free consultation.

"I'll be sending out some information packages during or just after the Christmas season," reiterated Paine, "but in the meanwhile, I'd like to encourage any interested parties to contact me. Our programs are unique and of course, we design them to meet the needs and criteria of our clients. To ensure a faster program delivery date, the sooner we can sit down and discuss the particulars, the sooner we can deliver our programs into the communities."

"A few weeks in your children's program, and my grandson is a different person," reads one of the many letters Paine receives from former students each year.

"After all these years of training with different systems ... you finally put it all together for me," reads another.

"Thanks, Calen!" reads yet another. "I feel so much more confident...Life is so much better since the classes..."

"The Training Centre's programs work; they are effective," adds Paine. Call Calen Paine at The Training Centre, (780) 974 - 1338 or visit the website at www.realtrainingcentre.com for more information.

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Crime Prevention Symposium upcoming

Driftpile First Nation is proud to host this year's third National Aboriginal Symposium on Crime Prevention which will be held in Edmonton on December 2 and 3 at the Wingate Inn.

The Driftpile First Nation is a member of the Lesser Slave Lake Regional Council within Treaty 8 and is faced with numerous economic and social conditions like many other communities across the country. "With limited resources Driftpile has rallied together to create a Community Watch Volunteer Team called FORCE (First Nations On Reserve Crime Elimination) and established the Wasakamapowin Youth Justice Committee," said Stephanie Hawking-Evans, The Restorative Justice Coordinator in Driftpile. "With a high crime rate we are working with our Regional Police to reduce crime in all aspects yet we are a long way from being crime free."

People who are developing crime prevention programs or projects need a certain set of skills in fundraising, proposal writing, network & partnership building, getting the community to buy in to the project, and an understanding of different aspects of the current legal system. More importantly, programs need to reflect the values and culture of Aboriginal people.

This conference will provide an opportunity to learn some of those skills, as well as a chance to network, share ideas about what works and what doesn't, learn from others' experience, and generally encourage each other to keep going.

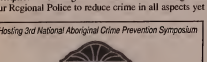
"Don't miss out on this great opportunity!" added Hawking-Evans. "On behalf of Chief and Council we look forward to meeting and learning from all those who will be attending."

For more information about the National Aboriginal Symposium on Crime Prevention call Bill Zarchikoff (604) 530-3840 or email wzarchik@direct.ca



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Feds revise offer

continued from page 2

to disallow further claims for those accepting compensation, the legal argument centered on the terminology that forbade the right to seek further compensation. Now that that issue has been resolved, there's another in its place. Why weren't all the arguments put on the table at once?

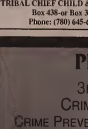
During the past five decades there have only been a dozen cases that have made it to court and concluded the process. Goodale says the current government wants to wipe the slate in seven to nine years - and that means taking care of at least 11,000 claims. The new process is designed to settle accounts with claimants who suffered physical and/or sexual abuse. It is expected to pay out somewhere between $5,000 and $250,000 per claim, depending on the severity of the abuse.

Assembly of First Nations Grand Chief, Phil Fontaine, called the ADR process and government's decision to allow additional lawsuits "a good start" but emphasized that healing takes more than money. He wants government to ensure that a comprehensive plan is put into place to deal with a total healing process.

"Any attempt at redress," he said, "must recognize the diversity of the survivors and their individual experiences. This includes not only financial considerations, but mechanisms by which we can learn to deal with their experiences, overcome the effects and begin to heal." The National Chief stated that it's up to each individual survivor to decide if he or she wants to pursue the federal process.

"ADR is a good approach and certainly much better than the courts which are adversarial and time-consuming," said National Chief Fontaine. "Yet, the approach announced today is incomplete and will remain incomplete until it deals with issues of culture and identity. We have put forward a number of proposals that address these issues and we'll continue to press the government to move towards a more comprehensive, effective approach."

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Focus on Family Violence

Awo Taan Shelter to host gala event

by John Copley

The Awo Taan Native Women's shelter is getting ready to host its November 27 fund raiser, Aboriginal Extravaganza 2003. The event, which organizers hope will be an ongoing annual celebration, has attracted some well-known names and Cheryle Chagnon, the Society's newest team member and the new Fund Development Officer, says visitors will be pleased with the line-up of events.

"This year's Aboriginal Extravaganza Gala," explained Chagnon, "brings together a uniquely talented group of Aboriginal entertainers and artists that include well-known comedian and puppeteer, Derrick Starlight, eclectic folk and rock mix singer, Walter McDonald from Calgary and Tsuki Marulie from the Blood Tribe, who will delight with an inspiring touch of the classics and well-known show tunes."

Other entertainers scheduled to appear include Eldon Weasel Child, Karla Red Crow, and Juno-nominated musician Olivia Tailfeathers, well-known for producing the Kainai Grassland singers.

The Fashion Show will highlight a number of gifted Aboriginal designers including Yvonne Jobin of Moon Stone Creations, Gerri Many Fingers, of Many Fingers Design, whose creations have been enjoyed by Robin Williams (actor), Prince Charles and Lady Diana and Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

"Colleen Klein," said Chagnon, "our very special honorary chairperson and keynote speaker will also attend the gala; that's something everyone is looking forward to. Colleen Klein is a role model and an inspiration to all Albertans and we're very honoured to have her speak on our behalf.

A Silent Auction, filled with unique items, will round out this year's celebration.

The Awo Taan Native Women's Shelter Society is located in Calgary. Considered to be one of the most successful and best-run shelters in the province's southern region, Awo Taan's professional administrators and staff are committed to ending family violence, and they do it through Society's motto "healing families, one family at a time."

Appropriately named (Awo Taan means "shield" in the Blackfoot language) the Society was first initiated in 1986 when organizer Ruth Scalp Lock and a group of equally concerned citizens decided it was time to create a shelter where women and children could seek refuge from family and other types of abuse. Though it took seven more years before the group was able to realize its goal of opening a full-time, fully-equipped facility, they did institute a mission statement and began to fulfill their mandate.

"The shelter's mission has expanded over the years," explained Cheryle Chagnon, "but initially the goal was to provide a traditional wholistic and spiritual approach to help Aboriginal women and their children through the healing process, and with the support of their community."

This approach, which is still maintained to this day, includes practicing the teachings of the Aboriginal Medicine Wheel, participating in ceremonies such as smudging and healing circles, and receiving Elder counseling and support. The shelter is also a meeting place where Aboriginal women can reconnect with their Aboriginal culture and continue their healing journey after they leave the shelter.

"The mission of the Society," said Chagnon, "has never wavered. It was conceived from a vision and grown through the hard work and dedication of its administration and its staff. The philosophies, the mission, our vision; they have each had a part in providing Awo Taan with a solid foundation. We are proud to be able to help women and children in abusive situations turn their lives around by providing shelter and integrated services, guidance through Native teachings and referral services for those who need outside aid.

The Awo Taan Native Women's Shelter Society is a 27-bed, full service emergency shelter that provides services to women and children from all cultures who have suffered from family violence and all forms of abuse. The shelter operates 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, and is run by a dedicated staff of 33. There is a minimum of two on-site counselors at the shelter 24 hours a day. Emergency counselors are always on call.

"Women and children are permitted to stay at the shelter for a period of up to three weeks," explained Chagnon. If shelter is required beyond the three week period, clients are either able to arrange an extended stay or are referred to other agencies.

"We offer a full range of traditional wholistic healing practices and we take a spiritual approach when helping Aboriginal women and their children through the healing process," reiterated Chagnon. "Elders play an integral role in the healing process; they have everyone's respect."

For more information about Awo Taan and how you can help the Society maintain its goals, or learn more about the November 27 Gala, call the Society at (403) 531-1970 or check out the Society's webpage at www.awotaan.org

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The cycle of abuse will only stop if both partners seek help

by H.C. Miller

Reports of family violence appear in the news daily and many more incidents go unreported. It seems that this very worst kind of violence is not lessening and every day another woman is seeking a safe house for herself and her children.

"There's a lot of financial pressure on families today with rising costs and unemployment for many unskilled workers in some communities," says Martha Houle, child support worker at the Bigstone Cree Emergency Women's Shelter in Desmarais, located in north-central Alberta. Houle has previously been employed as a crisis intervention worker and has seen the results of these pressures on families. "I came from an abusive relationship in my past as well, so I know first hand what desperate and frustrating conditions can do to a family."

Cutbacks to social assistance have also created financial hardship for people who struggle for the monetary resources to feed and clothe themselves and their children. "Nowadays there needs to be both spouses working to pay the bills, and that's pretty difficult to achieve," she adds. She hears the same stories across Canada when she attends workshops and conferences. "It's pretty universal. The women are often young single mothers who link up with a man who can help support her financially and emotionally, but it doesn't always work out that way."

The men, often overwhelmed by the costs and responsibilities of supporting a family, often escape to party with friends, and return home high on alcohol or drugs. "The woman learns to leave the house before he gets back, and avoid the violence that often occurs when her partner comes home. But it's a sad way to live," she says.



The abuse isn't always physical, says Houle. "Verbal abuse is almost worse than physical," she says. "Bruises will fade away in a few days, but the psychological effects of verbal attacks stay with us forever." The woman's self-confidence is destroyed and she begins to believe she can't make it on her own, away from the abusive relationship. She also fears leaving the support of her current partner to look for another as the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases rises.

The children see the abuse and begin to believe that this is acceptable behaviour. Little boys think it's okay to treat their future wives and girlfriends in an abusive way and little girls think it's their role to take it. "They begin to think it is normal behaviour. They may even see it in other generations – a grandmother for example," she says. Houle works with children to teach them that what they are seeing at home is not normal behaviour.

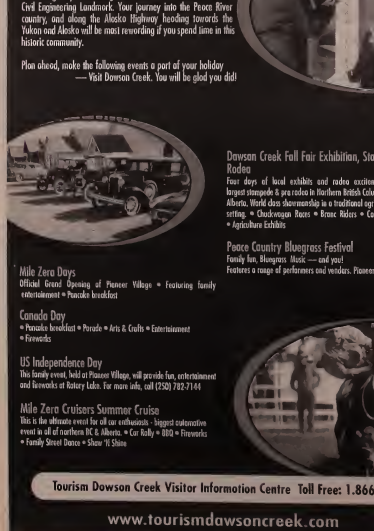
The Bigstone Cree facility is one of the 41-member Alberta Council of Women's Shelters that cover the province with safe houses for women and their children. It offers support to women for 21 days. "We work with them and their kids, counseling them on how they can get out of their abusive situations, and we can refer them to other agencies." Sometimes the woman wishes to return to school or post-secondary training so she can become financially independent and the staff can make recommendations and assist in the application processes. "Whatever they need to improve their family situation, whether it's moving to another location, getting the kids re-established in school, applying for funding, we can help," she says.

But helping the women and children is only part of the process. "The husband or boyfriend needs to go for counseling too. Most know what they have done is wrong and they admit they need help," she says. More facilities need to be available to men who require help with addictions and handling their anger. Communities need to establish men's groups where they can go for regular group or individual counseling. "We do not want to break up families. We need places where both male and female partners can go to improve their chances of establishing a happy, healthy home for their families."

Houle cautions women to get to know the new man in their lives well before committing to living together. "They need to spend about six months dating and becoming really well acquainted with him. Bouts of anger and violence will likely occur during that much time if he is the kind of man who may become an abuser."

If women suspect their partner may become abusive, they should prepare themselves. "Look up the emergency numbers in your local phone book before any incidents occur," she says. "Find out where the nearest shelter is. Our crisis line is 1-877-891-5322 and it's staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week." Hospitals and police stations can also be called for information.

If readers are in an abusive situation, they need to realize the effect it's having on themselves, and on their children. "No one should have to live in an unsafe environment. Think of what it's doing to your children. They are the leaders of tomorrow and we need them to grow up within a happy and positive environment."



The Healing Journey

HIV Awareness program is important to community

by Ennis Morris

One of the worst diseases to affect modern man continues to plague citizens around the globe, and despite the fact that HIV/AIDS is a preventable disease, it remains among the leading communicable disease killers on the planet. No matter what part of earth you inhabit, HIV/AIDS, exists. In most countries, the HIV virus continues to spread and grow, and although Africa is facing the biggest threat of population annihilation during the next 30 to 50 years if measures aren't soon taken to curb the growing epidemic, even Canada is feeling the effects of HIV and AIDS growth.

The Mannawanis Native Friendship Centre, located in the east-central Alberta town of St. Paul, introduced a new HIV Awareness Program to the area one year ago last spring. Considered to be one of the regions in Alberta with the largest STI growth rate, the new program was a blessing to the community and a valuable tool to be utilized by citizens throughout the St. Paul region.

"When the program was first established, this particular region was targeted as having the largest HIV growth rate in the province," explained HIV Awareness Program Coordinator, Judy Bogdan, during a recent interview. "We've made some progress in the last year and a half, but of course, HIV/AIDS is an ongoing problem and one that we must continue to consider a priority."

Bogdan is an educator with an outstanding employment repertoire that includes a variety of experiences within the educational system, including teaching at schools and colleges and within several of Alberta's Native communities. She has brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the job. Among her most accomplished talents is her ability to take control, to plan, to communicate and to succeed. That's probably the trait that allowed Judy Bogdan's communicative talents to be recognized even as she graduated from Andrew High School in 1974. That's the year she received the N.A. Melynk Scholarship, "in recognition of diligence in studies, positive role modeling and for involvement with class and community activities."

If there's one word that identifies Bogdan, that word is involvement. Participating in workshops and seminars, speaking to students at area schools, circulating newsletters, encouraging those with HIV/AIDS to come forward and get the help they need, ensuring that the community is aware that support programs are essential to help the ailing deal with their illness, and offering comfort and referrals to those hesitant to join local support groups are just some of the responsibilities that Bogdan assumes in her role as the MNFC's HIV/AIDS Program Coordinator.

"The mandate of the Centre's HIV/AIDS Awareness Program," offered Bogdan in an interview, "is to coordinate and promote awareness programs, primarily in schools and also in home and hospital visits with HIV/AIDS individuals. We also act as advocates for children and families and we offer family support services. Our workshops are designed to promote and strengthen the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well being of all participants and we do work in liaison with various educational and training institutions. Participation by the Elders is an integral component of the awareness process."



The Mannawanis Native Friendship Centre is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that dedicates itself to servicing the needs of Aboriginal people who live in the urban setting. The Centre's mandate also calls on the organization to strive to improve the quality of life in the community as a whole.

"Fundamental to this philosophy," added Bogdan, "is the importance of recognizing the inherent worth of all people, regardless of race, creed or culture and the promotion of this view in the community at large."

The goals of the HIV/AIDS Awareness Program parallel those of the organization in that both strive to promote better understanding and improved relationships between the Native and non-Native people in the region.

"If awareness and prevention programs are going to be effective," said Bogdan, "community support is imperative. I'm pleased to say that we get good support from the community here in St. Paul and from many of the smaller centres in the area. It's very important to work together to help resolve the issues that surround HIV/AIDS. There is a great deal of misunderstanding about how the HIV virus is spread and who can be affected by it. Contrary to popular belief, it is not a disease exclusive to the gay community."

The MNFC's HIV Awareness program has been making substantial progress in its quest to assist families in identifying support systems that can meet their individual needs. To attain this goal the Centre hosts workshops that address specific issues, encourage and provide support through information networking and provide phone call assistance and information to people seeking assistance.

"We can no longer turn a blind eye to the realities that exist in our communities," emphasized Bogdan.

The Mannawanis Youth Club, established to generate opportunities for young people to realize their potential, promotes the social, emotional, recreational and educational development of youth. The club, which works in partnership with the HIV Awareness Program, offers numerous services, including "promoting healthy lifestyles, encouraging recreational activities, helping to plan meetings and sharing and developing educational and social skills."

MNFC hosts a monthly, Sober Jamboree dance, an event designed to give people a place to meet and to have a good time without the influence of alcohol, drugs or other substances. The centre also hosts an Aboriginal Head Start Program that works together with parents of young children to give them a positive head start in life.

Judy Bogdan, like many of Canada's health care educators, dreams of the day when the education of these self-help and self-care programs becomes part of the school curriculum.

For more information about the Mannawanis Native Friendship Centre, its programs and its services or to learn more about the HIV/AIDS Awareness program, contact Judy Bogdan by calling (780) 645-4281 or by sending an email to mannatfc@mcsnet.ca.

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Lethbridge Centre looks forward to exciting future

by H. C. Miller

The Sik-Ooh-Kotoki Friendship Society in Lethbridge is entering a new phase of development. "For the last couple of years, we've been consumed by housing the homeless of our community. All our programs were either suspended or held off-site as we housed 60 to 80 people every night," explains Jim Short, executive director. "However on the first of September, we opened a new homeless shelter and can now expand our on-site programming." Located in the southern part of the province, Lethbridge is Alberta's third largest city and boasts a population of 72,000.

The homeless need shelter for a variety of reasons. "We have housed non-Native and Native people - the causes are universal and know no racial boundaries. Some are suffering from addictions, some have mental illness issues, others simply have employment problems," he says. The friendship centre partners with community agencies such as AADAC and the mental health offices to offer Alcohol Anonymous and other programs to help turn their lives around. "But there'll always be those we can't help in any other way except to offer friendship and shelter, and that's what we do."



Through the many months when on-site programming was not available, the centre continued through outreach programs to offer swimming, archery, basketball, and other youth activities in rented facilities. "Even our powwows were off-site. We were able to continue our programming, but it will be great to have it all happening right here at the centre now that the homeless are in other facilities."

The friendship centre has a staff of seven, with an additional 19 managing the homeless shelter. "It keeps the seven of us pretty occupied with running the many programs we have planned. We have lots of grants and proposals to write and activities to organize so it's going to keep us busy, but it's exciting to be able to have everything back under one roof," he adds.

Blackfoot Arts and Crafts is a big part of the friendship centre. "We showcase local artisans and we have elders teaching various crafts. We also sell the work to the public." The Blackfoot language is taught as well. A youth radio program broadcasts out of the Lethbridge University campus.

Culture is important to the staff and patrons. "Sik-Ooh-Kotoki, the name of our centre, is a Blackfoot word describing the black rock that was later recognized as coal. It was our ancestors' name for this place long before it became a settlement as it was obvious on the surface and dominated the landscape."

Although the centre is not located downtown, people have no trouble getting to it. "We're located on 2nd avenue south, and within a reasonable walking distance." The centre was begun in 1969 and Short, who is Manitoba born and raised, has been on staff since 1998.

Plans for the future include a refurbishment of the centre as funds become available as well as the renewed commitment to centralizing the programs under one roof. "Fundraising will be a priority," he laughs. "The local community is quite helpful, although there are always more partnerships we'd like to work at establishing."

Short, the board, and the staff, are all looking ahead to the next few months with anticipation. "The plans we have, the expanded programming, it's all very exciting and energizing. To sum it up, all I can say is - just watch us grow."

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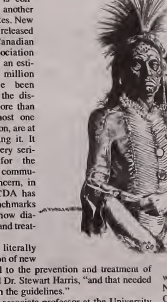
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Diabetes research studies Cree medicines

by John Copley

Obesity has become a North American epidemic. In Canada, the population is aging and its ethnic diversity is growing. These, say the country's health experts, are among the three key ingredients to a recipe gone awry that is contributing to yet another epidemic - diabetes. New information just released by the Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA) says that an estimated two million Canadians have been diagnosed with the disease and that more than 16 million, almost one half the population, are at risk of developing it. It has become a very serious concern for the nation's health community, such a concern, in fact, that the CDA has changed the benchmarks that determine how diabetes is viewed and treated.



"There has literally been an explosion of new evidence related to the prevention and treatment of diabetes," stated Dr. Stewart Harris, "and that needed to be reflected in the guidelines."

Dr. Harris, an associate professor at the University of Western Ontario, and Chairman of the Expert Guidelines Committee, was speaking during a mid-October CDA conference in Ottawa that spelled out a new set of guidelines for dealing with diabetes. Those guidelines, which offer information about how the disease can be prevented and/or treated, remove any notion that diabetes is simply a blood-sugar problem.

"Diabetes is a complex disease that affects all major organs," said Harris. "It's not just about blood sugars, anymore."

In fact, it has been determined that sugar is secondary to fat as the leading contributor to diabetes. Heart disease is responsible for 80 percent of diabetes-related deaths.

Equally startling is the fact that the average person who is diagnosed as a diabetic has had the disease for between five and seven years. This area of research is drawing a great deal of focus within Canada's medical community. "Exercise and diet," emphasizes Keith Dawson, an endocrinologist and professor emeritus at the University of British Columbia, "can prevent diabetes in about 60 percent of the population, but once a person is diabetic, we are unable to repair the problem with lifestyle (alone), we need medication."

The diabetes epidemic is widespread in Canada, and its growth is particularly noticeable in the country's Aboriginal populations. Much of the blame for the sudden growth of diabetes in Native communities has been attributed to changes in diet, exercise and lifestyle. The transition from a primarily nomadic lifestyle that required constant exercise, to one that often promotes over-eating in front of the television set has done its part in helping to increase the numbers of diabetes cases in Aboriginal Canada - a fact that's been apparent for past several decades or more.

Meanwhile, in eastern Canada, scientists from Montreal and Ottawa believe they have discovered what could be a new treatment for diabetes - blueberry plants and evergreen tree extract - and they're investing $900,000 of federal research money to find out.

Just days before Health Canada and the Institute of Aboriginal People's Health announced the launching of a major project that will look into the viability of traditional Cree medicines to fight what has become the fastest growing disease among North America's Aboriginal people. University of Ottawa chemist, John Thor Arnason, said early results indicate that though the extracts will not cure (Type 2) diabetes, there are signs that they could help in the control of the disease.

The three year project, which is already underway, indicates that Canada is once again assuming a leadership role when it comes to combating disease, and it's doing so by proving its willingness to utilize the resources in our own back yard. Arnasen, who praised the project's funding bodies for their intuitive and vision, says there is much to learned from traditional plant use.

"This is a great opportunity," Arnasen told the delegates at a recent Ottawa conference that focused on traditional medicines. "It is so difficult to get funding in this field. This is the first time we've started to get significant grants for this type of medical research, and it's big bucks." If the project is successful, he added, the plant extracts could replace the pills that Type 2 diabetes patients are required to take, but it can't replace the insulin shots needed by those with Type 1 diabetes.

Though the team of scientists working on the project won't name the exact extracts they're working with, all are believed to be native to the northern regions of Quebec, home to the Cree and to the main research station working on the medical initiative.

The new clinical-practice guidelines unveiled by the CDC have taken a virtual about-face, especially in light of new findings that indicate sugar, which has long been accused as the main contributor to diabetes, is in fact, not the main culprit. The new guidelines say that the primary bad guys are dietary fats and inactivity. They also suggest that every person over the age of 40 be tested for diabetes and that screening should be started even earlier if high blood pressure or high cholesterol has been diagnosed.

Aboriginal people are among the highest at risk, as are people of Hispanic, African, Asian and South Asian ancestry. Children with obesity problems should also begin regular checkups early in life. Obese or fat, says the guidelines, is determined to be when a man's belly (girth) is more than 40 inches around, and when a woman's exceeds 36.

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Book Review

The Truth About Stories,

A Native Narrative

by Thomas King
published by: House of Anansi Press Inc
copyright: Dead Dog Cafe Productions and Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
ISBN: 0-88784-696-3

review by John Copley

The truth about stories, particularly Aboriginal stories, says well known author, professor, radio commentator and lecturer, Thomas King, is that they can be just as damning and dangerous and they can be enlightening, truthful, educational and funny.

King, a Metis of Cherokee (father) and Greek (mother) ancestry, is one of North America's most celebrated storytellers and the release of his latest book, *The Truth About Stories, A Native Narrative*, will tell why he's considered to be just that. In his usual upbeat manner, King weaves his way through a tale that delivers powerful messages, more than enough food for thought and parting commentary that questions the moral fabric and ethical nature of western society.

Delivered in first person narrative, *The Truth About Stories* begins with traditional lore and continues with an illuminating view into the roles that history, literature, religion and politics have played in debilitating the stories of North America's Indigenous peoples.

"The truth about stories," writes King, on several occasions throughout the book, "is that that's all we are."

Thomas King's stories are meaningful, and they're fun, but they're told in a way that softens the occasional potshot he takes at society and some of its echelon. They deserve less padding, and in some cases, when their bad decisions were particularly hurtful, they deserve none. King is forgiving and he urges an end to dwelling on yesterdays. He's particularly positive and says today is a good day to begin the next part of the journey. Yesterday, he says, is a memory to learn by. With today comes the opportunity to get ready for tomorrow.

From a tale involving the variances of Aboriginal and Christian religions to another that delves into the false expectations that can come when age-old stories are misinterpreted, Thomas King weaves his words into a magical web as he compels his readers to dig

Continued on Page 24

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Dene Tha' youth combat drugs with dance

Forget gangster rap and New York side-walk break dancers – meet the Dene Tha' First Nation's "Krazy Kulture Krew."

It may not quite be the traditional Dene Tha' form of music and dance, but the dancers, from the Young Eagle Feathers youth group, are shaking things up in this High Level, Alberta community.

Boosted by a youth-esteem program funded by a $50,000 grant from First Nations Youth At-Risk (FNYAR), the young break dance team has become a key means to reaching youth in the community.

The team has participated in different competitions in Alberta and has been invited by other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities to perform.

"They have even performed in the public school in High Level, which was quite a boost for these kids, who tend to be shy," says project coordinator Pearl Chalifoux.

The dancers' growing fame in this First Nation of 2,300 people spread around High Level in the communities of Meander River, Chateh and Bushe River, has allowed a variety of recreational activities to be built around them at the Dene Tha's youth drop-in centre. Currently 15 youth are involved in the Young Eagle Feather group and about 100 more participate in the related activities.

While traditional culture is an important part of community life, the Krazy Kulture Krew has emerged as an effective way to launch a community attack against youth drug and alcohol abuse and suicides and achieve the goal the Dene Tha' have set for themselves of achieving crime free communities, says Ms. Chalifoux.

"Some of these kids are really good, we have two young men who performed in Edmonton after Thanksgiving at a Dreamcatchers meeting of 3,000 people, and I would really like to also organize a competition with kids from other communities," says Ms. Chalifoux.

The dance team is almost exclusively made up of boys, she explains, although there is one girl who dances. "The girls tend to be more shy, although they show up to support the dancers and cheer them on. We are working on another program that we hope will help the girls learn about our traditions and develop pride and self-esteem and respect."

"I know what it is like not to have this self-respect. I am 37, and it took me until age 32 to feel good about myself and proud to be an Aboriginal woman," says Ms. Chalifoux.

The idea behind the Dene Tha' project was to provide youth with answers to three crucial questions: Who am I? What do I want? How do I get it?

"We wanted to provide direction, confidence, esteem, critical skills development and opportunity for youth through a mix of cultural activities, cessation and self-help, and provide them with some good old fun in the process. Break-dancing is helping us do just that," says Ms. Chalifoux.

"The simple principle is that having a positive vision of their future includes setting and achieving goals and becoming more focused and motivated."

Break dancing hasn't solved the youth problems in the community, but is has provided an anchor and support group for the youth.

"I won't say nobody falls off the rails now and again, but they help each other back up and they know they have something positive to do that they are good at," says Ms. Chalifoux.

Harvey McCue, FNYAR's chairman, says the Dene Tha' project demonstrates the depth of innovative ideas and potential that exist for helping Aboriginal youth at risk. It also shows the need for funding to bring these ideas to life, and the extent of the challenge facing Aboriginal communities.

"There are no quick fixes. The need is for long-term, ongoing solutions," says Mr. McCue.

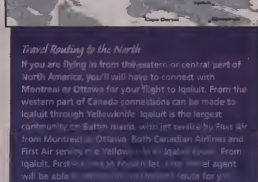
FNYAR is dedicated to helping First Nations develop such solutions. This year, with the funding donated by Imperial Tobacco Canada, FNYAR provided grants of $50,000 to 10 Aboriginal communities that submitted innovative proposals to provide alternatives for youth at risk and promote youth leadership and role models. Eight projects are currently underway.

Pond Inlet
AND BEYOND



The Inuit community of Pond Inlet is located at the northeastern end of Baffin Island in the Canadian Arctic. The population is a little over one thousand people (95 per cent Inuit, 5 per cent non-Inuit). The native language spoken by Inuit is Inuktitut and although English is spoken, Inuktitut is still the most commonly used language.

At 72°41' North and 77°58' West, Pond Inlet is 644 km (400 miles) above the Arctic Circle. The Inuktitut name for the area has always been "Mittimatalik," meaning "the place where Mittima is buried." The Inuit also refer to the Pond Inlet area as "purtujuq" which means land with depth. The gorgeous rugged mountain scenery of Bylot Island provides the land "with the depth" to which Inuit refer.



Travel Routing to the North

If you are flying in from the eastern or central part of North America, you'll will have to connect with Montreal or Ottawa for your flight to Iqaluit. From the western part of Canada connections can be made to Iqaluit through Yellowknife. Iqaluit is the largest community on Baffin Island, with jet service by First Air from Montreal or Ottawa. Both Canadian Airlines and First Air service Yellowknife on a daily basis. From Iqaluit, First Air or Nunavut Jet Link general agent will be able to arrange your onward route for you.

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While staying in Pond Inlet you can choose to stay at the Sauniq Hotel. The 12 guest rooms and suites each have a private bathroom and satellite television available. There is a laundry facility, gift cards, etc. The hotel also has a breathtaking view of the mountains and you can have a relaxing soak in the hot tub.

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Protecting Mother Earth

Native perspectives included in new legislation

Important changes have been made to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, which will strengthen the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives into assessments and provide a formal recognition of Aboriginal traditional knowledge.

Several new amendments to the Act affirm that the Aboriginal peoples in Canada have a unique role to play in many environmental assessments, particularly those involving reserve lands, treaty lands and land claim settlement areas.

The Act has been amended to formally recognize the value of traditional knowledge in conducting environmental assessments. Responsable authorities and review panels are now encouraged to consider traditional knowledge in their assessments. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency must now consult Aboriginal peoples on policy issues related to the Act. To this end, an Aboriginal advisory committee will be established. The agency, with input from this committee, will develop guidelines on how traditional knowledge can be accessed and incorporated into environmental assessments.

The Act now emphasizes the importance of communication and cooperation between federal authorities that conduct assessments and Aboriginal peoples. A loophole has now been closed to ensure that federally funded projects on reserve lands receive an assessment. The Act also provides authority for regulations that could be used by band councils to assess projects where they have decision-making authority.

The recent changes will also result in higher quality assessments, a process that is more predictable and timely, and more opportunities for meaningful public participation. "This is an important step in the evolution of environmental assessment in Canada," said Minister Anderson. "The renewed Act will allow both the promotion of a prosperous economy and a healthy, sustainable environment."

The government will inject $51.2 million in new funding over the first five years and another $8 million each year afterwards to support the strengthened federal process.



Canadians wishing to take part in the environmental assessment of projects in their communities will now have easy access to a new Internet registry of project information and opportunities to participate. The registry can be found on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's Web site at www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca.

Project proponents can look forward to more consistent information requirements and more timely decisions for their projects through, for example, the role of a federal environmental assessment coordinator. These coordinators will assist federal departments in working together and with other jurisdictions.

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's role will also be strengthened, allowing it to promote compliance, resolve disputes and coordinate federal involvement in assessments conducted in cooperation with other jurisdictions.

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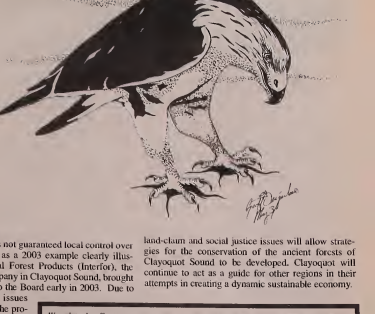
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Clayoquot - In the Midst of Change

Liam McNeil, Friends of Clayoquot Sound



Clayoquot Sound, a 265,000 ha wilderness on the West Coast of Vancouver Island, covered in world-renowned ancient forests, has become a model for many other areas of British Columbia. Clayoquot came to the forefront of international scrutiny a decade ago as countless people argued that the long-term success of the economy hinges on the health of the ecosystem. Today the proper understanding and stewardship of the land is of the greatest importance in achieving this goal. While obstacles still wait to be overcome the communities in Clayoquot Sound continue to make progress towards sustainability.

Since the 1850s three quarters of the ancient forests of Vancouver Island have been logged. This rapid deforestation has left many forest dependent communities struggling to survive, as mills, facing dwindling timber supplies, have closed down. Clayoquot Sound now contains the largest area of intact ancient temperate rainforest left on Vancouver Island and the lower mainland.

Public awareness of the global rarity of temperate rainforests and the depleted state of Vancouver Island's forests has resulted in numerous demands for the protection of Clayoquot Sound. First Nations, Friends of Clayoquot Sound, and many other residents have advocated for local control over the land base for years. After the culmination of the mass protests of 1993, many advances have brought positive change to the area. The creation of the Scientific Panel for Sustainable Forest Practices in Clayoquot Sound, while not guaranteeing the protection of the ancient forests, attempts to blend science and the traditional ecological knowledge of First Nations into a long-term management plan. In 2000, Clayoquot Sound was designated an UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, and while this brings no new environmental protection or regulation it does recognize the ecological and cultural importance of the area. The Biosphere designation also came with a fund to promote research, training, and education, with a conservation and sustainable development focus.

The Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations, the original inhabitants of the Clayoquot area, have never ceded the rights to their traditional lands. The concept of hishuk ish ts'awalk ('everything is one') has long been a guiding principle in land management for the Nuu-chah-nulth. The Interim Measures Agreement, a pre-treaty agreement signed in 1994, created the Central Region Board, a resource planning advisory body, half composed of First Nation representatives.

The existence of the Board, however, has not guaranteed local control over land use decisions, as a 2003 example clearly illustrates. International Forest Products (Interfor), the largest logging company in Clayoquot Sound, brought their logging plan to the Board early in 2003. Due to many unresolved issues the Board rejected the proposed plan. Interfor, undaunted, proceeded to take the plan, with no alterations, to government who promptly approved it. The Tla-o-qui-aht band then issued Interfor with an eviction notice from their traditional territories.

While challenges still wait to be overcome, combining traditional and current values of respect for the environment will help the communities of Clayoquot Sound in the transition towards a long-term sustainable future. Increasing local control over the land, including recognizing and resolving land-claim and social justice issues will allow strategies for the conservation of the ancient forests of Clayoquot Sound to be developed. Clayoquot will continue to act as a guide for other regions in their attempts in creating a dynamic sustainable economy.

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Independent Selection Committee 2003-2004

Request for Applications

Aboriginal Peoples Television Network – (APTN), a world leader in Aboriginal broadcasting – is seeking applications for its Independent Selection Committee (ISC).

The Independent Selection Committee is responsible for recommendations for selection (in conjunction with the Programming Department) of all licensed programs. A face-to-face meeting of the ISC will be held at least once a year, with briefing notes to be provided by the Programming Department.

The ISC will consist of five members: one from the North, one from the South, one from the East, one from the West, and one French-speaking individual, with one of the five to be a Youth Member (18 to 30).

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Must be a First Nation, Métis or Inuit citizen and a resident of Canada.
- Must have thorough understanding of the Aboriginal community, with knowledge and appreciation of the importance of Aboriginal language.
- Cannot be affiliated with APTN's Board of Directors or staff.
- Cannot be affiliated with any production or distribution company or political organization.
- Must have knowledge of the television broadcast industry.
- Must be willing to make a significant commitment in time (3 to 4 day selection session).
- Must be willing to travel (Winnipeg).
- Must have access to a computer or laptop with Internet access and e-mail.
- Must have knowledge of APTN's mandate and vision.

APTN reserves the right to request evidence of an applicant's Aboriginal status.

For complete application requirements and to download an application form, please go to www.aptn.ca or call toll-free: 1-888-278-8862 ext 227

Applications must reference file #ISC-APTN-2003-01. Send hard copies only, to be received at our office no later than 3:00 pm Pacific Time, 5:00 pm Central Time, 6:00 pm Eastern Time, December 16, 2003, to the following address:

ATTN: File #ISC-APTN-2003-01
Aboriginal Peoples Television Network
339 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2C3

If you have further questions about the role or of the Independent Selection Committee, please visit the APTN Web Site: www.aptn.ca or call the office of APTN toll-free 1-888-278-8862 ext 227 and refer to file #ISC-APTN-2003-01.

Aboriginal Peoples Television Network

Book Review

White Bear of the North: Wapusk

By Dennis Fast, Text by Rebecca L. Grambo
ISBN1-896150-32-2
Published by Heartland Associates Inc.
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Review by H. C. Miller

The polar bear of the north, or "wapusk" as the Cree named him, survives in one of the harshest climates on the globe. About 60 percent of the estimated 22,000 polar bears in the world today live in Canada. Photographer Dennis Fast has captured images of these magnificent animals in their natural environment in a new book release entitled *White Bear of the North: Wapusk*, a 112-page book which enthusiasts of nature and wildlife must add to their collections.

"This book is about passion, beauty and wonder," says Fast in his introduction. "Passion for a natural world, often threatened by man. Beauty that can be found anywhere by those who have eyes to see. And wonder in the sense that somehow the polar bear and his world were created to send shivers of awe through our being."

But the book is more than photographic expertise. A retired school principal, Fast also educates his readers in the ways of the polar bear. One picture shows a mother and her cubs bedded down in a snowy hollow. Another shows the animal camouflaged near a seal's breathing hole, watching for unsuspecting seals that surface to breathe and instead become instant fodder for the 600-kilogram bear. The environment in which the bear lives is documented in pictures as well, including other animals, the plant life of the arctic regions, and birds.

The life cycle of the polar bear is followed pictorially, from its first few weeks of life, through adolescence to adulthood, and finally witnesses the rarely seen death of one of these remarkable mammals. Fast has not only recorded stunning pictures, but relays an emotional sensitivity as well when two orphaned bear cubs cuddle the cooling corpse of their mother.

Rebecca L. Grambo has supplied the beautifully written and highly informative text that accompanies the pictures, which were mostly taken near Churchill, Manitoba. While she has a university degree in geological engineering, Grambo's interest in animals has seen her career evolve into that of a natural history writer and photographer. Since 1994 she has written more than 20 books from her home in Warman, Saskatchewan, including many for children.

Grambo's pursuit of the story of the polar bear saw her spend two summers in the Arctic. "The polar bear rules a kingdom dominated for much of the year by snow and ice," she states in her introduction. "Digging into the fossil record for clues to the bear's past allows an exploration of the remarkable adaptations that enable it to succeed in the unforgiving arctic regions of the world."

The symbiotic partnership of Fast and Grambo has given readers a rare and complete glimpse into the evolution of the polar bear from its past, and most importantly, it also provides a look into its future. Final chapters are dedicated to the bear's rather bleak outlook in a habitat that is increasingly threatened by chemicals such as herbicides, pesticides, industrial chemicals and industrial by-products. The presence of metals in both seals and polar bears threatens the development of the brain in both species. Other pollutants disrupt the hormones that affect the development of the embryos in pregnant females.

In May of 2001, delegates from 127 countries met to approve earlier recommendations, which eliminate some of the world's most hazardous chemicals. As well, polar bear researchers are becoming increasingly alarmed at the effect of global warming on the bear's habitat, which is decreasing as the ice shrinks in area and become thinner. Our awareness of these problems is heightened through the reading of this keepsake volume.

The book is available at Coles and other local bookstores or can be ordered direct from publisher, HeartLand Associates at Winnipeg, Manitoba, phone (204) 475-7720, e-mail hrtland@mts.net.

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Economic Development

Cold Lake First Nation ventures with consulting company

by Mike Wiffley P. Biol.

There is no doubt that Albertans benefit from the almost incomparable resource extraction that occurs in Alberta. Oil, gas, forest products, agriculture products, and livestock are resources that are extracted or grown in Alberta and exported to other parts of the country and the world in great quantities. The cattle industry's loss of the world market for beef products in 2003 highlighted the trade relationship this industry has with the United States and the world. The impact of the loss of market for Alberta's cattle operators was felt from Rainbow Lake to Milk River, and the economic impacts are still reverberating through the province.

Many Albertans benefit by living in a strong economy with high employment rates, a healthy business sector, and a high standard of living. Big corporations in the oil and gas sector succeed by selling their resource products to a world market and, as Albertans are well aware, one of the world's largest commercial and retail economies is right next-door. When this neighbour comes over to borrow some oil, they don't ask for a litre, they ask for millions of barrels.

Alberta's First Nations communities do not always benefit from natural resource development in their community. In many cases in the past, community members were not offered employment opportunities, business opportunities, or community growth opportunities and resource royalties were not collected by the First Nation.

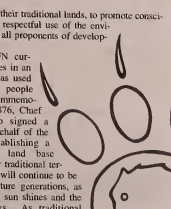
However, there has been a shift in the interaction between First Nations, the environment and the business sector in Alberta. Although resource businesses operate in a highly competitive world marketplace, there is growing awareness and concern for environmentally sustainable and culturally inclusive methods of operation in the open market and in the world's psyche.

The formation of an environmental services company owned by the Cold Lake First Nation (CLFN) community, which is located adjacent to the town of Cold Lake and AXYS Environmental Consulting Ltd. (AXYS) of Calgary, is an example of the emerging synergy that exists between First Nations, the environmental industry, and resource extraction corporations.

The joint company, Nu Nenné - AXYS Inc., reflects the shared values of the Cold Lake First Nation and AXYS' respect for the land, respect for the environment, natural resources, and respect for values of the community. Nu Nenné is a Déné term meaning "Our land" which embodies the value and importance placed on the land by this community.

The Cold Lake First Nation is committed to the preservation and protection of their traditional lands. The goal of the CLFN is to leave a legacy of an environmentally sound and sustainable natural environment for future generations, in keeping with their treaty rights. CLFN's relationship with the land is sacred, and includes the water, the air, and all resources. It is the responsibility of the CLFN, as stewards of their traditional lands, to promote conscientious and respectful use of the environment by all proponents of development.

The CLFN currently resides in an area that was used by their people since time immemorial. In 1876, Chief Kinoosayoo signed a treaty on behalf of the CLFN, establishing a permanent land base within their traditional territories. It will continue to be used by future generations, as long as the sun shines and the water flows. As traditional stewards of the environment and their cultural history, the CLFN maintains a strong interest in, and concern with, development projects.



Nu Nenné-AXYS Inc. is a community-based business that supports capacity building by providing work experience and training to CLFN members. By training, skill development, work experience and business opportunities supporting oil and gas developments, local community capabilities and local expertise are enhanced. By providing input into proposed developments on traditional lands, the sustainable operation of developments is a priority focus for oil, gas and forestry developers and the local community.

As a majority owner of Nu Nenné-AXYS Inc., the Cold Lake First Nation has the potential to realize financial benefits that can be invested into the community to provide goods and services that the community needs. The partnership will also provide employment opportunities for youth in the community that will invest technical tools and experience that will assist them as they ascend to become the next generation of stewards of their land. In this way, the Cold Lake First Nation can join so many other Albertans and benefit from Ralph's "Alberta Advantage".

Mike Wiffley is an Environmental Specialist with AXYS Environmental Consulting Ltd.

Family violence and abuse are community concerns — We salute the efforts of all those seeking the Healing Path, from Thomas Harper

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Imperial Oil

Public Notice
Imperial Oil Resources
Kearl Oil Sands Project
Proposed Revised Terms of Reference
Environmental Impact Assessment

Imperial Oil Resources (Imperial) is proposing to advance the Kearl Oil Sands Project that includes oil sands mining, bitumen extraction and upgrading facilities that will produce 200,000 barrels per day of bitumen. It will be located on parts of oil sands leases 6, 10, 11A, and 35 and is located in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, approximately 70 km from Fort McMurray in parts of Township 96, 96 and 97 Range 7 and Township 95 and 96 Range 8, all west of the 4th Meridian.

The project was initially proposed by ExxonMobil (formerly Mobil Oil Canada) in 1997 and at that time Alberta Environment directed that an environmental impact assessment report be prepared for the project. After Mobil and Imperial merged in 1999, Imperial decided to continue with the project. In 2002, Imperial submitted a proposal for oil sands mining projects even more so than certain aspects of the project. Alberta Environment has determined that a more current EIA is needed. Imperial, acknowledging the TOR for the most recent proposed oil sands mining projects have incorporated significant opportunities for input, has prepared a proposed revised TOR for the Kearl Oil Sands Project based on the most recent TOR and invites public review and comment. Copies of the proposed TOR and a Project Update may be reviewed at the following locations: Fort McMurray Public Library, Oil Sands Discovery Centre, 7 – 11th Ingenuity Municipal Office, Fort McMurray IRC Office and Alberta Environment's Regulator of Environmental Assessment, 111 Twin Atria Building, 4999 98th Ave. Edmonton, Alta. T6B 2X3.

Copies may be obtained directly from Imperial by contacting:

Shaun Hudson
Kearl Oil Sands Project
Imperial Oil Resources
1535 Research Road N.W. Calgary Alberta T2N 2N8
Tel: (403) 284-7543 Fax: (403) 284 7431
E-mail: shaun.hudson@esso.ca

Persons wishing to provide written comments on the proposed Terms of Reference should do so prior to December 23, 2003 to:

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Northern Region Alberta Environment
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New stats document Aboriginal workforce

New statistics show how Aboriginal people are contributing to the province's economy. According to the Aboriginal Labour Force Survey by Statistics Canada and the Alberta government, Aboriginal people living off reserve have a slightly higher labour force participation rate than the overall Alberta rate. In September 2003, 75.5 percent of the working age population in this group were working or actively looking for work, compared with Alberta's overall rate of 74.2 percent.

"This survey is important because it provides current and specific information that can be used to help guide future decisions about the province's Aboriginal employment programs and policies," said Alberta Human Resources and Employment Minister Clint Dunford. "Alberta employers continue to need skilled workers and this survey gives us a more complete picture of the sectors in which Aboriginal people are already making contributions."

According to the survey, the unemployment rate of Alberta's Aboriginal people living off reserve was 9.4 percent in September 2003. The unemployment rate for Métis people (7.3 percent) was less than the North American Indian group (16.1 per cent). The unemployment rate of Aboriginal people living off reserve was 9.5 percent in Edmonton, 5.8 percent in Calgary and 11.6 percent for the rest of Alberta. The September 2003 unemployment rate for Alberta's total population was 4.9 per cent. The unemployment rate for Aboriginal youth ages 15-24 was 12.3 percent. The Alberta youth unemployment rate was 9 percent.

The industries that employed the greatest number of Aboriginal people were: Construction (9,700); Retail and Wholesale Trade (9,000); and Forestry, Fishing, Mining, Oil and Gas (5,000). "This survey ties into a key initiative within the Aboriginal Policy Framework, which is to help Aboriginal people to find and keep jobs," said Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Minister Pearl Calahasen. "We will continue to work with other ministries to design, develop and deliver policies, programs and services specifically aimed at preparing Aboriginal people to meet current and future needs for skilled workers in Alberta."

The project is part of the new Aboriginal portion of Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey, which provides statistics about the employment status, age groups and occupations of Aboriginal people living off reserve. Monthly labour force statistics are posted on the Alberta Human Resources and Employment website at www.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi



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Chief Executive officer Matt Thorpe of Karma and Associates Inc. is a member of the Métis Nation and brings over 20 years experience and training as a mediator, trainer, group facilitator and community liaison service provider. He received his formal mediation training at Harvard Law School
Matt Thorpe believes that mediation is more cost effective and holistic than using a formal grievance process or the mainstream legal system. Mediation encourages every individual to be heard, relationships to be strengthened and communities to grow.
Matt teaches that leadership and wellness are the keys this powerful future for every individual, community and organization.
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Book Review

Between Colliding Worlds

The Ambiguous Existence of Government Agencies for Aboriginal and Women's Policy

by Jonathan Malloy
Part of a series of books sponsored by the Institute of Public Administration of Canada
published by the University of Toronto Press
ISBN: 0-8020-3717-8

review by Ennis Morris

Johnathan Malloy's latest release, *Between Colliding Worlds, The Ambiguous Existence of Government Agencies for Aboriginal and Women's Policy*, published by the University of Toronto Press earlier this year, is the final part in a six-part series sponsored by the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC). The project, a part of its ongoing commitment to encourage research on issues in Canadian public administration, public sector management and public policy, also seeks to foster wider knowledge and understanding among practitioners, academics and the general public.

Malloy's book examines, in some detail, the relationship between various government agencies and outside activists by conducting a comparative study of Canadian and Australian agencies, particularly those dedicated to women's and Aboriginal issues. These two groups are among those the author refers to as "special policy agencies", and though the programs for women are set-up completely opposite of those for Aboriginals, they work in cohesion for study and analytic purposes. State-created structures linked directly to social movements and activist societies differ, for example, in the reasons why they exist. Most structures created for women's issues, says the author in his introduction, come about as a result of demands made by the special movement groups themselves. In Aboriginal linked structures, however, it is the governments that create the structures and without any clear demands from the internal movements.

Malloy argues that special policy agencies are rife with intensive conflicts. He refers to the agencies as "ambiguous (borderline, clouded, dubious)" but lauds them for the knowledge they offer simply by existing. He sympathizes, or at least identifies with the difficult situation that agency staff constantly find themselves in, trying to meet their mandates but pressured by changing demands and growing expectations from their funding bodies, usually the government departments they answer to.

But Malloy suggests that instead of "criticizing these agencies for their inherently contradictory nature, we regard them as effective means of bridging social movements and state politics." He argues somewhat convincingly that it is in fact the overall ineffectiveness of these agencies that makes them an important tool from which to learn. Australian National University Political Science head, Marian Sawer, agrees. He called *Between Colliding Worlds*, "a significant contribution to knowledge," adding that Malloy's manuscript "is at the cutting edge of international scholarship on the intersection of social movements and policy agencies within government."

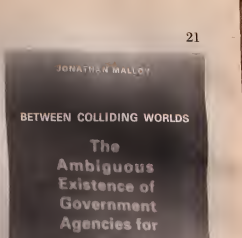
Beginning with a Chapter 1 introduction and a second that explains the creation and/or the necessity for 'special policy agencies', Malloy moves quickly along in Chapter 3, *The Colliding Worlds*, as he delves into greater detail about the ongoing pressures placed on the agencies by growing social movements and the expectations of public administration environments. This chapter explores those environments and brings readers into focus through the study of social issues and concerns facing other groups and other nations. Even without the Aboriginal movements, writes Malloy, "social movements form a sprawling category with porous boundaries. So much that in fact, establishing boundaries and formal definitions of social movements is itself a significant preoccupation for scholars."

Then there are the interest groups. They are considerably different to social movements in that they usually focus on a particular program or policy and are less confrontational than their social movement cousins. How women's groups and those initiated by Indigenous populations operate, what they stand for and what they hope to accomplish, are just some of the topics that scratch the surface of the broader range of subjects dealt with in *Between Colliding Worlds*.

In Jonathan Malloy's 217 page manuscript readers will find an extremely broad range of information that will enhance the knowledge of anyone interested in learning the elements of social movements and the agencies created to deal with them. *Between Colliding Worlds* is a particularly good read for those studying or writing about social groups and their effect on government policy. The author notes that although most Aboriginal agencies are formed or created by provincial governments, it doesn't necessarily mean those governments condone the issues or even recognize the objectives of these movements.

Other works included in the IPAC Series, edited by Donald Savoie, include: *Networks of Knowledge: Collaborative Innovation in International Learning*; Janice Stein, Richard Simeon, Joy Fitzgibbon, and Melissa MacLean (2001); *Beyond Service: State Workers, Public Policy, and the Prospects for Democratic Administration*, Greg McElligott (2001); *The National Research Council in the Innovation Policy Era: Changing Hierarchies, Networks, and Markets*, G. Bruce Doern and Richard Levesque (2002); *A Law Unto Itself: How the Ontario Municipal Board Has Developed and Applied Land-Use Planning Policy*, John G. Chipman (2002); Health Care, Entitlement, and Citizenship, Candace Johnson Redden (2002); and *The Politics of Public Management: The HRDC Audit of Grants and Contributions*, David A. Good (2003).

Jonathan Malloy is an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at Carleton University.



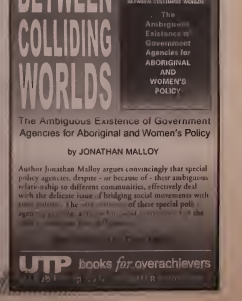
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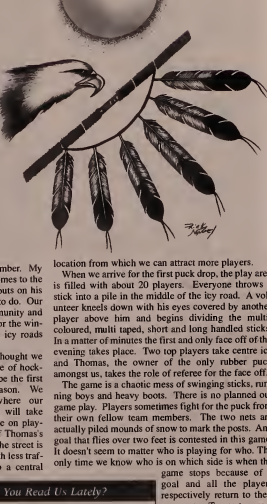
Chasing the puck

by Xavier Kataquapit

The weather has turned bitterly cold in the community and the snow has started to accumulate over the past several days. It is the late fall and winter has come early. The sudden cold weather has driven everyone in the community indoors. My younger brothers and I stay in and entertain ourselves as much as possible. There are not many activities for us to take part in. We don't have a lot of toys and any odd abandoned objects in the house turn into play things.

It is a Saturday afternoon and my brothers and I are growing restless in the house. When the weather lets up, mom allows us to go outside. We are bundled up in warm clothes and we each have a new pair of winter boots with black rubber soles, blue cloth linings and shiny oversized metal zippers. Mom also gives us our recently crafted winter moose hide mitts and fur-lined hats to keep us warm. As soon as we hit the road we each seek out our friends in the neighborhood. Joseph runs off across our vast yard to an adjacent block to play with our cousin Bruce. Paul wanders down in the other direction to meet another cousin Travis who lives nearby.

I have my own plans as well and head for a nearby house just a small block away. It is the first cold snap of the year and I am wondering what is planned for our day of play. When I arrive at my cousin Henry Kataquapit's house, his son Thomas greets me at the door. Thomas and I are the same age and have known each other since we both can remember. My visit to his house is a regular one and he comes to the entrance with jacket in hand and quickly puts on his boots. Outside we are at a loss as to what to do. Our bicycles, which we use to patrol the community and meet others our age, have been put away for the winter. Even if we could haul them out, the icy roads would make it impossible to ride.



After some thought we plan on a game of hockey. This will be the first one of the season. We ponder on where our opening game will take place and settle on playing in front of Thomas's house, where the street is quieter and with less traffic. It is also a central location from which we can attract more players.

When we arrive for the first puck drop, the play area is filled with about 20 players. Everyone throws a stick into a pile in the middle of the icy road. A volunteer kneels down with his eyes covered by another player above him and begins dividing the multi-coloured, multi taped, short and long handled sticks. In a matter of minutes the first and only face off of the evening takes place. Two top players take centre ice and Thomas, the owner of the only rubber puck amongst us, takes the role of referee for the face off.

The game is a chaotic mess of swinging sticks, running boys and heavy boots. There is no planned out game play. Players sometimes fight for the puck from their own fellow team members. The two nets are actually piled mounds of snow to mark the posts. Any goal that flies over two feet is contested in this game. It doesn't seem to matter who is playing for who. The only time we know who is on which side is when the game stops because of a goal and all the players respectively return to their own net. To start a new round, the losing side brings the puck out from their end and calls the game to begin again.

No one seems to be keeping score during our play. We do not even notice the dimming light of the early evening. A small porch light from Thomas's house illuminates half our play area. As twilight diminishes and night sets in, it gets harder for us to follow the bouncing puck amongst the long shadows of running legs and hockey sticks. We continue on, not wanting to stop. Sometimes we battle for a puck that has become a ghost and we swing at it with no results. There is laughter, shouts of joy and the turmoil of life in our little remote community is put on hold as we focus on running around after this puck. Our only real goal is a little uncomplicated happiness.

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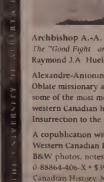
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CD Rom Review

Celestine:

A Trilogy, Volumes One to Three

by Roy Lynn Piepenburg
Earth Harmony Publishing
ISBN: 0-9682699-4-x

review by John Copley

American author Roy Lynn Piepenburg has a new book on the market, though you'll have to have a computer to get this particular manuscript. That's because the three-part novel, *Celestine: A Trilogy, Volume One to Three*, actually comes via a single CD ROM disk, formatted for Windows, 2000 and XP operating systems, though a Mac G4 running OS X will also work. *Celestine* is a story about Celestine LaFleur, her Crow Creek community and her struggle to secure a relevant education within a system that reeks of racism and misused power. It's a work of fiction, but it comes across as being true - perhaps because most of the events that take place in the story are based on real life situations. Piepenburg is well known both in Canada and internationally for his long term involvement with Aboriginal issues and his determination to see that governments, no matter who or where they are, either live up to their commitments and obligations to First Nations or suffer the penalty of embarrassment for failing to do so.

Celestine: A Trilogy, Volume One to Three, is a well-written story. It has a solid cast of characters, good description and more dialogue than most of the books we've looked at this year. Piepenburg's subject matter, however, could be considered old hat - and well it might be, except for the author's special knack of one-upmanship - especially when it comes to storytelling.

Celestine is as interesting as it is volatile; the story line is good, the facts are accurate and the theme is familiar, but sadly, readers will be left without a conclusion. As it is expressed throughout the book, the end result can not be reached until governments rid themselves of the dehumanizing rules, regulations and expectations they've set on the Indigenous Peoples of the world, and that were created specifically to keep them under control.

Celestine is a story about an Aboriginal woman who wanted to get an education, who was entitled to an education, who was promised an education - but who had a very difficult time getting one. From back-passing to changing legislation and from outright lies and blatant racism to compassion, understanding and communication, *Celestine*, the book, runs the gamut of emotion. Celestine, the character, is strong, though vulnerable, determined, though initially impatient. She's likable, has the will to succeed, and she could be anyone. The theme of Piepenburg's novel isn't restricted to any one of the earth's many Indigenous peoples. Instead his story could be applied to any Aboriginal person, no matter if he or she is a resident of Canada, America, Australia or any other nation.

Piepenburg knows his material and he's done the research required to make some of the statements he does, but most Canadians, this one included, will be a little suspicious by the author's persistent cheering when describing or referring to Castro's Cuba. American readers, particularly Cubans, Indigenous or otherwise, might not agree with the author's endorsement of Cuban government policies. Piepenburg is concerned, as we all should be, about the plight of the Indigenous people residing in the western hemisphere. Throughout his manuscript the author, to drive home a point or to ensure readers understand the overall goal of his book, points out disturbing, often gut-wrenching facts. For example, between 1900 and 1957 the Indian population in Brazil plummeted from more than 1,000,000 to less than 200,000. By 1981 - the last year that an accurate census was provided - the 1957 population had diminished by more than half.

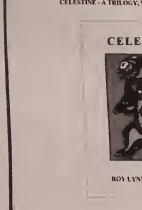
"In the year 1900," writes Piepenburg, "230 tribes were known to exist in Brazil; 87 of these are now extinct. According to the 'Indigena' publication, the Indian population control in Brazil has resulted through the dreadful devices of sugar cubes coated in arsenic and the distribution of disease-infected blankets."

Now that sounds familiar - perhaps because the British did the same thing to Canada's Indigenous peoples. The Americans, meanwhile, didn't resort to trickery. They simply ran their soldiers through Native villages and slaughtered everyone in sight. Piepenburg's material isn't new, but it is fresh. It isn't pretty, but it's down-to-earth. The manuscript jumps from one nation to another providing the author with a forum to present information about Indigenous conditions worldwide. Some of the facts are not even closely related to Celestine, but each is interesting enough, that the reader will appreciate the knowledge that's been gained by the addition.

Readers of *Celestine: A Trilogy, Volume One to Three*, will be left with a better understanding of what it's like to be an Aboriginal person in the Americas, but they will not be left with any sense of conclusion or closure. That climax is still many years away, if achievement is even possible. Instead readers will be left wondering how Celestine and her people have managed to survive as long as they have. Piepenburg's trilogy gives readers a personal view of the world's Indigenous peoples. He advocates honesty and urges governments to gather up the will and the fortitude to act in good faith.

Piepenburg's CD ROM novel does what it's intended to do. It educates the public by presenting the facts and questions the lack of will on the part of world leaders to get involved in providing equity for Aboriginal nations and peoples.

Roy Lynn Piepenburg is a university graduate whose specialties include both elementary and secondary education, sociology, literature and the French language. Growing up in the State of Wisconsin, not too far from the Oneida and Menominii Indian reservations, Piepenburg has taught and lived in numerous Indigenous communities over the years, including those of the Navajo, Arapaho, Chippewa, Assiniboine, Shoshoni and Grose Verte. Piepenburg was employed for more than 12 years with the American and Canadian governments as a teacher, counselor, academic/vocational coordinator and as a senior education administrator. He's coordinated conferences, participated in workshops and seminars, acted as an international observer in countries that include Canada, Sweden and Australia and is well known for the strong role he played in the 1970s when pushing for educational reform and urging Ottawa to allow First Nations to take control of their own community education programs. He's also written numerous newspaper and magazine articles on the various aspects of First Nations education.



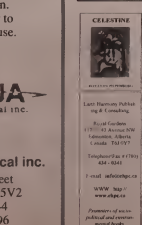
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The Truth About Stories

continued from page 14

through the text, to listen to his words and to remember the importance of getting the story right.

King puts the blame for much of the maligning of Aboriginal stories and Aboriginal people in general, on the storytellers, the historians, the courts and the political arena. He even ridicules his own behaviour, or his lack of early foresight, and says all the misery that Aboriginal people have suffered since colonization in Canada and since military conquest in the USA, could have been prevented, if only someone would have had the courage to speak up.

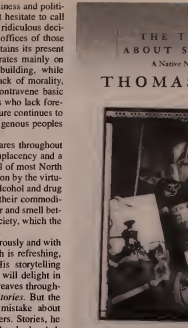
"It's not that we don't care about ethics or ethical behaviour," said King, speaking about North American culture. "It's not that we don't care about the environment, about society, about morality. It's just that we care more about our comfort and the things that make us comfortable - property, prestige, power, appearance, and safety. And things that isolate us from the vicissitudes of life. Money, for instance. Money is wonderful insulation...it won't buy you happiness but it will keep you out of the chill of poverty."

With the uncanny magic of a storytelling champion, King offers readers a brief look at various scenarios that have taken place in Canada's business and political arenas over the years and doesn't hesitate to call attention to the bad moves and often ridiculous decisions that have come from the head offices of those two entities. As long as society maintains its present course, one the author says concentrates mainly on self-gratification and bank-account building, while turning a blind eye to the growing lack of morality, questionable ethics, principles that contravene basic honesty and top level decision makers who lack foresight or thought for tomorrow, the future continues to look bleak - and not only for the Indigenous peoples of North America.

Many of the tales Thomas King shares throughout the book's five chapters, point to complacency and a lack of follow-through as the downfall of most North Americans. Mixed messages, brought on by the virtual commercial freedom that tobacco, alcohol and drug companies enjoy as they tell us how their commodities will make us look better, feel better and smell better, add to the growing problems in society, which the author believes is not likely to change.

King writes lightly, poetically, humorously and with much grace. His lighthearted approach is refreshing, affecting and unique to his style. His storytelling charm is second to none, and readers will delight in the many tales of mythical magic he weaves throughout the entirety of *The Truth About Stories*. But the author's underlying tone makes no mistake about what he's trying to impart to his readers. Stories, he says, need to be listened to; they need to be heeded. Stories, he maintains in each of his opening paragraphs, are who we are. They must not be forgotten. Unfortunately he adds, the stories about the Aboriginal people of North America are about as far from reality as one can get.

Thomas King has traveled the world, he's written a dozen books, and he's been nominated for the Governor General's Award and the Commonwealth Writer's Prize. He hosts the successful CBC Radio show, *The Dead Dog Cafe Comedy Hour* and though he spent the last two and a half decades teaching Native Studies in Utah, Minnesota and Alberta, he's currently Professor of English at the University of Guelph.



King shares the knowledge he's gained in life by offering insight into what plagues modern day society and though he certainly understands that the odds are stacked against change, his words inspire hope.

In the final analysis, *The Truth About Stories* is the truth about life. If you'd like to hear that story and it's one you can believe, you'll find it between the covers of Thomas' new book. Look for it in your local bookstore - now out in paperback for just $18.95 Canadian.

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The Two Hunters

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt, told by Ida Ratt



Once upon a time there were two men out hunting for food. They couldn't kill anything right away and they became very hungry. Then one of them happened to see a chicken and shot it with his bow and arrow.

They built a fire and cooked the chicken on a stick. The man who had killed the chicken did not want to share it with his partner, so they decided to have a contest to see who would get the chicken. They agreed that whoever had the most unusual dream would get the chicken all to himself.



When they were ready for bed, one of them decided to wait for the other to sleep. When he heard him snoring, he got up slowly, so as not to make a noise and ... ate all the chicken!





In the morning when they got up, the man who had slept told his partner what he had dreamt. He had dreamt that he was on the stairway to heaven and had seen his grandfather coming to meet him. When he asked his partner what he had dreamt, his partner said, "I believe what you are telling me because I saw you on your way up — so I thought to myself, since he won't be down here for a while, I might as well eat the chicken by myself."

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Youth Awareness

Standing Senate Committee urges "portable" rights

A report on Urban Aboriginal Youth was recently released by the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples. The report contains wide-ranging recommendations on a number of important issues for urban First Nations youth including education, health, transition programs and jurisdiction.

One of the key recommendations is the report's recognition of the "portability" of First Nations rights for First Nations citizens regardless of whether they live on- or off-reserve. The recommendation urges the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to work in collaboration with First Nations to "develop procedures and guidelines recognizing the portability of rights of First Nations people".

"We have always taken the position that First Nations citizens carry their rights with them regardless of where they choose to reside," said Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine. "When I leave my First Nation community I do not leave my identity, my rights or my citizenship at the boundary. The recommendation is focused on Indian Affairs, but all federal departments and agencies must accept this reality and work in partnership with our governments to produce procedures, guidelines and the necessary resources to deal with this policy vacuum."



According to recent census data, about half of the First Nations population lives off-reserve. Further, more than half the First Nation population is considered youth (under the age of 25). Recognizing this, the AFN established in 2002 a National Youth Council with youth representatives from all regions as a principal component of the Assembly. AFN Youth Council representatives appeared before the Senate Committee during its recent hearings to make a presentation.

"Experience shows that the key factor for success in any initiative aimed at First Nations youth is that we be involved from the very beginning in the design, development and delivery of these initiatives," said Ginger Gosnell, the AFN Youth Council representative from BC. "The Senate report clearly benefited from the recommendations of First Nations youth and we have to remain involved to make sure the follow-through is successful as well."

National Chief Fontaine agreed that First Nations youth as well as First Nations must have a central role in implementing these recommendations.

"The report contains a number of important recommendations that will greatly improve the situation of First Nations youth living in urban centres and First Nations people in general," said National Chief Fontaine. "Our youth are a large and dynamic population. They will be driving the economic and political life of this country in the coming years. We must harness that energy and provide education, employment and hope. This makes for stronger First Nations and a stronger country for everyone."

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Aboriginal youth explore their future

Last month nearly 1,500 Aboriginal youths from across Canada gathered at Grant MacEwan College for the 11th Annual Dreamcatcher Aboriginal Youth Conference.

The theme of this year's conference was *Knowledge is Power: Be Smart, Stay Strong, Move Forward.* The annual Dreamcatcher Conference is about connecting young people to their cultures, learning from the wisdom of our Elders, and looking ahead to the limitless opportunities in our future.

One of the largest youth conferences in Canada, Dreamcatcher is for youth 13 to 18 years of age and their adult chaperones. Through educational workshops, cultural teachings, traditional dancing, singing and crafts, Dreamcatcher aims to inspire and inform our youth to make positive lifestyle choices. Drawing youth from across the country, Dreamcatcher is a great forum to explore the common ground that makes Aboriginal cultures so strong.

Dreamcatcher combined traditional wisdom and Aboriginal culture with modern issues facing Canada's native youth. With more than sixty workshops ranging from arts and crafts to youth empowerment and health, Dreamcatcher offered our young people a chance to come together with strength and pride. Workshops included everything from career investigations to suicide prevention to how to publish a novel.

More than ever, today's Aboriginal youth are embracing their traditions and history to make sense of modern culture. Elders from local tribes joined this year's Dreamcatcher Conference with prayers and pipe ceremonies to mark the occasion of this great celebration. Friday's Opening Ceremonies at MacEwan's Sport & Wellness Centre featured a grand entry parade with unique banners from different communities and a traditional Round Dance. Host drum group, the Alexis Singers, performed along with traditional throat singers, a hoop dancer, Metis moccasin dancers and several youth dance troupes.

For more information, visit Dreamcatcher online www.dreamcatcher.macewan.ca



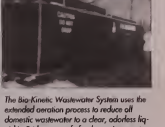
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